

# CAMBRIDGE HARKENER

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE OF CAMBRIDGE, VERMONT

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May 2022

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The Underhill CCC camp built this log shelter at the Underhill State Park during the 1930s. VT DEP

## The Cambridge Historical Society presents a History of the Vermont Civilian Conservation Corps Camps May 26th at 7 p.m., 49 School St, Jeffersonville, VT

On May 26th at 7 p.m., the Cambridge Historical Society will host author and historian Marty Podskoch who will give a Power Point presentation on the History of the Vermont Civilian Conservation Corps Camps.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began on March 31, 1933 under President Roosevelt's "New Deal" to relieve the poverty and unemployment of the Depression. CCC camps were set up in many VT towns, state parks, & forests. Workers built trails, roads, campsites, & dams, stocked fish, built & maintained fire tower observer's cabins & telephone lines, fought fires, & planted millions of trees. The CCC disbanded in 1942 due to the need for men in WW II.

There were approx. 30 VT towns with camps: Barre, Bethel, Brunswick, Burke, Colchester, Danby, Elmore, Groton, Jericho, Ludlow, Marshfield, Mendon, Middlesex, Milton, Montpelier, Northfield, Peru, Plymouth, Poultney, Rochester, Bellows Falls, Sharon, Shrewsbury, St. Albans, Stowe/Moscow, Thetford, Underhill, Waterbury, Weston, Wilmington, and Windsor.

Marty Podskoch is a retired teacher from Delhi (Catskills, NY) and the author of eleven books including: *Adirondack Civilian Conservation Corps Camps: Their History, Memories and Legacy of the CCC*; *Fire Towers of the Catskills: Their History and Lore*, *Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore, the Southern Districts*; *Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore, the Northern Districts*; *Adirondack Stories: Historical Sketches*; *101 More Adirondack Stories: Historical Sketches*; *The Adirondack 102 Club: Your Passport & Guide to the North Country*. He also writes a weekly column called "Adirondack Stories," in five Adirondack newspapers. He wrote two Connecticut books: *Connecticut Civilian Conservation Corps Camps: Their History, Memories and Legacy of the CCC* and *the Connecticut 169 Club: Your Passport & Guide to Exploring Ct*. He just completed two Rhode Island books: *RI CCC Camps* and *RI 39 Club*.

He is presently gathering information for future books on the 30 CCC camps in VT and the 70 camps in MA. Podskoch is keenly interested in meeting individuals who may have CCC stories and photos to contribute to these books. Those that have information should contact him at (860) 267-2442 or podskoch@comcast.net.

The Milton/Sand Bar CCC camp began the construction of the first public bathhouse (35' x 90") in VT. The upper level of the bathhouse was originally used as living quarters for caretakers and life guards. The Bathhouse was completed by side camp from Underhill Camp. VT DEP



# Early History of Cambridge

by Ida Morgan Anderson

Beginning in 1935, Ida Morgan Anderson began serializing a column on the History of Cambridge in the *Cambridge Town Crier*. Many of our readers may remember the series of 27 Installments. The Harkener continues publishing the installments for a new audience on the assumption that the copyright (if it ever existed) has long since expired. We hope you will enjoy these "blasts from the past."

## Installation Fourteen

The Hotel had a long history. The brick part was built in 1826 by Peleg Stearns on the site of an old log cabin, and was a stopping place for the stages that passed through here. It was called the Eagle Hotel. Later, the long ell extending toward the east was added, the upper story of which was made into a place for entertainments with "Concert Hall" painted across the side in great white letters. The hotel barn was replaced at right angles with this ell with the end against the sidewalk, making a kind of courtyard where the stages and all other vehicles stopped.

The hotel proprietor thriftilly kept a few hogs and the hopyard extended beside the sidewalk from the back door of the barn to the harness shop oc-



cupied many years later by Byron Holmes. This arrangement afforded the hogs and their little families a chance to get the fresh air, enjoy the scenery, and observe the activities of their fellow citizens. Also it gave the passing farmers a chance to lean over the fence and guess the "heft" of the placid inmates, a diversion dear to the heart of every true farmer. Any criticism on this arrangement by modern minds, would show great disrespect for the customs of our forefathers. Years after, the barn and its occupants were moved into the back yard.

It is customary to think that before the arrival of automobiles, radios and movies, people must have had very dull times. Nothing but work, everlastingly. Not so. The first settlers had "raisings" where many hands made light work of putting up buildings. "Drawings", where every man was invited to come with his oxen and logging chains and draw a building to a better location. It had been placed upon rollers and with much haw-ing and gee-ing rolled smoothly to the desired spot. The women furnished a big dinner and there was much fun and good cheer. There were "apple cuts", quilting and hustings,

where the red ear caused many laughs and blushes.

The Boro was very proud of its fine horses, and after supper, in the long summer days, many "horse trots" were held down the long middle road of the village. Daniel Cutting, his son, Albert Cutting, Colonel C.D. Gates and Hamp Colgrove would bring out their shining, well-kept horses. Tom Henessey, who lived just over the town line in Fairfax, and had a colt that was threatened with speed, would come jogging up the river road on his "sulky" and the fun would begin. Women sat on their front ve-



randas, while the men collected on the steps of the stores and hung over the hitching rails to watch the race. So enthusiastic were they over this sport, that Daniel Cutting had a half mile race track laid out in the meadow back of his house and horse races, foot races and "field days" were held there.

Oyster suppers were a favorite way of raising money to help pay the minister, or to help some poor family who was sick and in need. There were loads of good things to eat. The band played, there was singing and "speaking pieces", and a good time was had by all.

Troops of strolling players gave entertainments in the concert hall that were talked of for weeks afterward. Local talent put on plays "exhibitions", they were called, in the vestry of the old church, that were hilariously funny, and, there were "sociables", parties, surprise and otherwise, where they played copenhagen, spat 'em out of the room, needles eye, roll the tin, and many others, with kisses for forfeits. Older persons saw no harm in that but dancing was strictly forbidden. Any skipping about to the scraping of the wicked fiddle was sternly frowned down upon and even card playing stamped anyone as a rowdy and dubious associate.

In summer there were picnics and as a crowning joy - a circus. One circus furnished more excitement than usual. I take the account from an old newspaper.

"In July, 1850 a large caravan and circus combined came to the Boro and pitched their tents near what used to be known as the old Willoughby orchard. No sooner had the tent been erected and a few spec-

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tators entered it, than a terrific wind arose which blew the sand and dust in blinding clouds through the streets and leveled the tent to the ground. The cages containing the animals were tipped over and many of them escaped but were recaptured. Some deer that escaped were recaptured in Mr. Dunshee's barnyard. The monkeys were recaptured by the boys in the tops of the apple trees. But what attracted the most attention by those present was the conduct of the old elephant known as the Tippo Sahib. Before the people had so much as thought that there was a storm in the air the great beast had sniffed it from afar and then with one tremendous bound broke loose from his fastenings and made for the door of the tent, scattering the bystanders right and left with his huge trunk, but seemingly with no desire to hurt them, until he cleared the doomed tent, and then with a reeling, rocking gait that outstripped his keeper, who seated upon his horse was in rapid pursuit, he made directly for the sheltering side of the old church, where he quietly suffered himself to be caressed by his keeper and fed by the bystanders with sweet apples and candy."

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## **Upcoming Programs Mark your Calendars**

Wednesday June 8

### **The History of the 2nd Congregational Church, Jeffersonville**

*Melody Tobin*

This program was the first casualty of COVID 19. Join Melody Tobin for a history of this historic church.

Wednesday July 13

### **1800 and Froze to Death**

*Howard Coffin*

Join Historian Howard Coffin as he relates how Vermonters survived the Year Without a Summer. A Vermont Humanities Council Speakers Bureau Program.

Wednesday August 10

### **What's Going on in the Notch?**

*Seth Jensen*

Seth Jensen, Deputy Director of Lamoille County Planning Commission, will explain what all those yellow trucks in the Notch are doing.

Wednesday September 14

### **Post Offices of Cambridge**

*Bonnie Hitchcock*

Bonnie has presented a program on Cambridge Post Offices to the Third Grade for several years. Now she's agreed to present the program to the historical society.

Wednesday October 12

### **Cambridge Village National Register Nomination**

*Cambridge Village Historic Preservation Committee*

Cambridge Village has begun the process of seeking nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Preservation Committee will explain why, how, and when.

Wednesday November 9

### **Annual Meeting and Election of Officers**

Wednesday December 14

### **Annual Christmas Party**

For the first time since 2019, CHS is planning to hold its Christmas Party.

More information on each program will be available as the dates get closer. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the programs reach out to Georgetiana Little.

## Membership Application/Renewal

Please complete this form and mail to: Cambridge Historical Society  
PO Box 16  
Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0016  
or email to: [rgtle@stoweaccess.com](mailto:rgtle@stoweaccess.com)

New

Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Number Street Town State Zip

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Category

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Business \$25.00

Please consider becoming a:

Patron \$500.00

Benefactor \$1,000.00+

If you have suggestions about program topics or have some great ideas for fundraisers,  
please let us know by listing your ideas below.

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Cambridge Historical Society  
PO Box 16  
Jeffersonville, VT 05464



## We are finally back!

Starting in June, CHS will be holding their regular meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Warner Lodge.

This month's special program will be held on Thursday May 26 to accomodate the speaker.  
See the announcement on Page 1.

ALL are welcome.

If you're tired of Zoom, streaming, or just being stuck in the house, plan to join us and learn more about the history of Cambridge and enjoy meeting friends again in a relaxed atmosphere.

If you have an idea for a program please let us know. You can call Georgeana Little at (802) 335-2002 or email to [rgtle@stoweaccess.com](mailto:rgtle@stoweaccess.com)

We have included a Membership Application in this issue. If you haven't renewed, please do so. This Newsletter is one of the perks of membership, so to continue receiving The Harkener renew your membership, and THANK YOU.